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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8148
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1506
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4995
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8588
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6157
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4018
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1981
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000720

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA;

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: PRESSURE INCREASING ON BURMESE ACTIVISTS AS
ANNIVERSARY APPROACHES

REF: RANGOON 714

Classified By: Pol Officer Chelsia Wheeler for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) Embassy contacts confirm that GOB security forces arrested 88 Generation Student (88GS) activist Nilar Thein late on the evening of September 10. Separately, 35 88GS activists who were arrested in August 2007 were charged on September 9 and 11 with libel against friendly foreign powers and attempts to disrupt the National Convention. The past two weeks have brought a rash of arrests of NLD members, including 11 from Rangoon and 10 from Magwe Division. END SUMMARY.

Nilar Thein Arrested

2. (C) Nilar Thein's brother-in-law, Myo Min Yu, confirmed to us that the prominent 88GS activist was arrested at approximately 9:30 p.m. September 10 in Rangoon. Myo Min Yu said he did not know where authorities took her after her arrest. He knew no further details.

3. (C) Nilar Thein had been in hiding since August 2007 when authorities arrested 70 other 88GS activists, including Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, and Nilar Thein's husband Ko Jimmy, a.k.a. Kyaw Min Yu for their roles in organizing demonstrations against the regime's raising of fuel prices. Since then, authorities have kept her infant daughter under surveillance, presumably hoping that Nilar Thein would come out of hiding to see the child, who is now over a year old and in the care of a relative. Nilar Thein is one of the most prominent female activists in the 88GS movement.

Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Others Charged

4. (C) Lawyer U Aung Thein confirmed that 35 88GS were charged September 9 for libel against friendly foreign governments. This charge may be connected with statements that 88GS released against China and Russia regarding the UNSC resolution in January 2007 and demonstrations in front of those embassies, but the court

hearing did not address the specific event related to the charge.

15. (C) The 88GS detainees appeared in court again on September 11 and were charged under the "Law Protecting the Peaceful Transfer of State Responsibility and the Successful Performance of the Functions of the National Convention Against the Disturbances and Oppositions," i.e. they were accused of disrupting and opposing the National Convention. The charge carries a sentence of five to 20 years in prison and the possibility of a fine. The same group appeared on September 2, but did not have a hearing, because they protested being handcuffed and demanded a public trial with media presence. Their demands have gone unanswered.

NLD Members Arrested

16. (C) Embassy contacts confirmed that in the past two weeks, over twenty NLD members have been arrested around the country. Eleven were arrested late at night on August 27 at their homes in Rangoon. GOB police forces arrested 10 others at their homes in several areas of Magwe Division on September 6.

Comment

17. (C) The arrests and court appearances over the past two weeks, the press conference accusing Human Rights Defenders and Promoters head U Myint Aye of terrorism, and the close

RANGOON 00000720 002 OF 002

surveillance and interrogation of Embassy contacts in recent weeks (ref) may be evidence of tighter GOB scrutiny of opposition activities in the lead-up to the first anniversary of the pro-democracy protests and crackdown last September.
DINGER